

Summer Reading Assignment for AP English Language and Composition

Teachers: Lancaster and Philpot

Rationale

What the Dog Saw: And Other Adventures is a compilation of Malcolm Gladwell's best essays from his work at *The New Yorker*. These essays and, as a result, this book are the embodiment of a curious mind making use of the art and science of rhetoric, not to mention the perseverance of research—both empirical and rational. Our hope is that you internalize these data, analyze these arguments, but, most importantly, realize how the skills you will learn in AP English Language and Composition (and have learned in past courses) can be synthesized in order to discover for yourself and convey to others novel knowledge. Oh, and we hope you find some of these essays just plain fascinating.

Your Charge

Read the book—actively. This may mean annotating the essays, maintaining a dialectical journal¹, or compiling and email exchange re: the book's essays with a friend. These methods of retaining the information in *What the Dog Saw* will not be graded, but these tasks, and believe us when we tell you this, will aid drastically in performing successfully on the exam that you will be given over said book. The other formative assessment will be a rhetorical analysis over your favorite essay from *What the Dog Saw*.

Rhetorical Analysis

Choose one essay that you found particularly fascinating. Consider the organization of the essay. Why does Gladwell begin as he begins? Why does he end as he ends? Is there a pattern in the information that is given? Is there a pattern in how the information is given? What do these organizational choices mean for the reader? Does the organization change the argument? Does the organization change the effectiveness of the argument? What about rhetorical appeal? Does Gladwell rely on ethos, pathos, and/or logos? Do not use these words in your essay. Instead, ask yourself, what type of emotion does the author elicit? Is the logic deductive, inductive, value-based, syllogistic or what? More importantly, what effect does this type of reasoning have on the reader?

You will write this analysis as you would a formal essay—introduction (complete with thesis (complete with division of proofs)), body paragraphs (complete with properly embedded textual evidence), and conclusion. The purpose of this essay is not to respond to Gladwell's argument, but rather to analyze *what* he is communicating to his audience and *how* he is effectively achieving his intended purpose through various strategies of composition.

Essays will be typed and done so in MLA format. See the Purdue Owl online for MLA details: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>.

Book Exam

See above for suggestions with regard to internalizing the book's various arguments. Said suggestions will also make for easy study guides. Pay attention to overall arguments, as well as details that may act as microcosms of particular arguments or at least pivotal moments of elucidation (read: significant moments).

Due Date: First day of school

¹ Don't know what this is? Look it up on Internet.com.org.net.